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Department of State

INCOMING TELEGRAM

EL Salvador (120)

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ACTION ARA-15

INFO OCT-01 AOS-00 HA-05 TRSE-00 CIAE-00 NSAE-00
NSCE-00 SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10
L-03 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 AID-07 PC-01 SY-05 SYE-00
DCT-02 IO-14 /087 W
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O R 082330Z FEB 88
FM AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6765
INFO AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA
AMEMBASSY MANAGUA
AMEMBASSY PANAMA
AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE
AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA
USCINCSO QUARRY HTS PN
DIA WASHDC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 SAN SALVADOR 0931

E.O. 12065: GDS 2/8/86 (DEVINE, FRANK J) OR-M
TAGS: ASEC PINS PINT ES
SUBJ: (U) PUBLIC CONTROVERSY DEVELOPS OVER DISAPPEARANCE OF TWO STUDENTS SEIZED AT U.S. EMBASSY

REF SAN SALVADOR 0818

1. (C - ENTIRE TEXT)

2. AS EMBASSY HAS REPORTED, TWO PERSONS WERE ARRESTED AT PERIMETER OF U.S. EMBASSY COMPOUND ON JAN 22. THAT WAS DATE OF MASSIVE DEMONSTRATION BY MILITANT LEFT WHICH DEGENERATED INTO SHOOTING AND OTHER INCIDENTS OF VIOLENCE WHICH LEFT OVER 20 DEAD AND MANY MORE WOUNDED. DAY'S EVENTS WERE SEIZED UPON BY ALL OPPONENTS OF GOVERNMENT AND DEPICTED AS LATEST "MASSACRE" EITHER BY SECURITY FORCES, FORCES OF ULTRA-RIGHT, OR BOTH. OUR POLITICAL CONTACTS TELL US THAT CHANCES OF RAPPROACHEMENT BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND ITS OPPOSITION WERE GREATLY SET BACK BY VIOLENCE OF JAN 22 AND MAY IN FACT HAVE BEEN CANCELED OUT.

3. APPARENTLY EN ROUTE BACK FROM THE DEMONSTRATION, TWO INDIVIDUALS PASSED EMBASSY CHANCERY GROUNDS. NATIONAL GUARD AND TREASURY POLICE ON DUTY THAT DAY WITHIN EMBASSY GROUNDS OBSERVED THEM PLACE A MOLOTOV COCKTAIL INSIDE EMBASSY FENCE. SECURITY SERVICES PERSONNEL STOPPED THEM AT GUNPOINT, WALKED THEM BACK TO EMBASSY PARKING LOT ENTRANCE, SEARCHED THEM, CALLED WHAT WAS APPARENTLY AN UNMARKED VEHICLE OF SECURITY SERVICES AND HAD BOTH INDIVIDUALS REMOVED FROM THE SCENE.

4. LOCAL PRESS HAS RECENTLY BEGUN TO CARRY REPORTS THAT INDIVIDUALS ARRESTED NEAR EMBASSY WERE LAW STUDENTS FRANCISCO ARNULFO VENTURA AND JOSE UMBERTO MEJIA AND HAVE NOT BEEN SEEN SINCE. "EL INDEPENDIENTE", A MILITANTLY LEFTIST NEWSPAPER, CHARGED PROMINENTLY THAT STUDENTS HAD BEEN CAPTURED BY U.S. MARINES AND WERE BEING HELD PRISONERS IN THE BASEMENT OF OUR EMBASSY. THIS CHARGE WAS SPECIFICALLY ATTRIBUTED BY "EL INDEPENDIENTE" TO OSCAR BONILLA, PRESIDENT OF THE GENERAL ASSOCIATION OF SALVADORAN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS (AGEUS), WHICH IS A COMPONENT ELEMENT OF POPULAR REVOLUTIONARY BLOC (BPR). EMBASSY ISSUED PUBLIC DENIAL OF THIS.

3. SINCE THEN, PUBLIC CHARGES AGAINST EMBASSY HAVE UNDERGONE PROGRESSIVE CHANGES AS MORE PEOPLE, ORGANIZATIONS AND GROUPS HAVE JOINED THE ISSUE. IN FACE OF CONTINUING FALSE ACCUSATIONS, ICA HAS PUBLISHED ANOTHER

OFFICIAL DECLARATION BY EMBASSY STATING THAT EMBASSY PERSONNEL DID NOT PARTICIPATE IN CAPTURE OF ANY STUDENTS, THAT EMBASSY AT NO TIME HAD THEM IN ITS POWER, AND THAT EMBASSY THEREFORE DID NOT "DELIVER THEM" TO ANY OTHER PERSONS AS CHARGED. IN VIEW OF CONCENTRATION OF PUBLISHED REPORTS UPON ROLE OF U.S. MARINES, EMBASSY DENIED EMPHATICALLY THAT MARINES ON DUTY HERE HAD BEEN INVOLVED IN ANY WAY IN CAPTURE OF THE STUDENTS. OUR DECLARATION CLOSED BY

SAYING, "THE POSITION OF THE NORTH AMERICAN GOVERNMENT IS CLEAR AND FORTHCOMING WITH RESPECT TO THE EFFECT OF AND RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS. THIS, OF COURSE, INCLUDES PROPER TREATMENT FOR PERSONS UNDER ARREST."

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DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY [signature] DATE 8 JUL 1987
PORTIONS DENIED AS INDICATED

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INCOMING TELEGRAM

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 SAN SALVADOR 0931

OF TWO INDIVIDUALS -- AND IN FACT MOST EMBASSY OFFICERS WERE UNAWARE OF INCIDENT AT TIME IT OCCURRED -- WE ARE RENDERED SOMEWHAT VULNERABLE BY FACT THAT NATIONAL GUARD/TREASURY POLICE BROUGHT BOTH INDIVIDUALS ONTO EMBASSY PREMISES AT GUNPOINT AND HELD THEM THERE UNTIL CAR CAME TO TAKE THEM AWAY. PRESUMABLY INDIVIDUALS ARE SAME ONES AS NOW BEING AMED IN "AGEUS" PUBLIC PRONOUNCEMENTS BUT WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO THEM IN UNKNOWN. CONCEIVABLY THEY COULD HAVE BEEN RELEASED, GONE INTO HIDING, AND BE BEING EXPLOITED BY "AGEUS" AND MILITANT LEFT FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES. CONCEIVABLY THEY ARE BEING HELD SOMEWHERE BY SECURITY FORCES. BUT THINGS BEING WHAT THEY ARE HERE, THERE IS ALSO THE POSSIBILITY THAT THEY ARE DEAD.

DEVINE

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